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Chapter III.

Instrumentation

American concert bands are found mainly at schools and universities. Community bands have dwindled to a handful and the professional band is extinct. Technical ability ranges from that of beginners in elementary groups to university and service bands of the highest standards. Arranging for the band "in general" gives no way to know what instrumentation or ability a specific band has. A typical junior high school band might consist of these players:

6 Flutes	2 F horns
1 Oboe	3 Trombones
8 B \flat clarinets	1 Baritone
1 Bass clarinet	2 Tubas
2 Alto saxes	Percussion – Bells being the only mallet instrument.
1 Tenor sax.	Timpani – two drums
8 Trumpets	

This instrumentation exemplifies the weakness of younger bands: Woodwinds are overpowered by brass and lacking in double reeds, low woodwinds and horns.

A well-instrumentated high school band might have these players:

8 Flutes – one doubling piccolo	9 Trumpets
2 Oboes	4 F horns
1 Bassoon	6 Trombones
12 B \flat clarinets	2 Baritones
1 Alto clarinet	4 Tubas
2 Bass clarinets	1 String bass
1 Contrabass clarinet	1 Electric bass
4 Alto saxes	Percussion – Xylophone and bells as well as instruments such as the gong.
2 Tenor saxes	Timpani – three drums
1 Baritone sax	

This is a good instrumentation for a high school band but still weak in bassoons, alto clarinets and horns. It is common to see large saxophone sections, particularly altos and tenors. But I believe no more than one player on a part is needed; too many saxes can overpower and destroy the delicacy of other woodwinds.

An ideal concert band might consist of the following players:

10 Flutes - one doubling piccolo	1 Baritone sax
2 Oboes - one doubling English horn	9 Trumpets
2 Bassoons - one doubling Contra bassoon	8 F horns
1 E \flat clarinet	6 Trombones
18 B \flat clarinets	2 Baritones
4 Alto clarinets	4 Tubas
4 Bass clarinets	1 String bass
2 Contrabass clarinets	1 Electric bass
2 Alto saxes	Percussion - full component
1 Tenor sax	Timpani - four drums

TRANSCRIBING – FROM THE PIANO

Compare these two examples from Bach. Although the *Gavotte* might work for woodwinds, it is too pianistic for heavier band scoring, even though the harmonies could be filled in: the *Bouree* has more possibilities.

Ex. No. 4 – *GAVOTTE from the 3rd English Suite (Bach)*

Allegro

Ex. No. 5 – *BOUREE from the 3rd Suite for Cello (Bach)*

Allegro moderato

One possibility would be to feature a brass trio of two trumpets and trombone with punctuating chords from the ensemble:

Ex. No. 6

Brass trio

Ens. +8va
mf